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INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 004696

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2033  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PARM](#) [MOPS](#) [CH](#) [TW](#)  
SUBJECT: DASD SEDNEY DISCUSSES CROSS-STRAIT MILITARY ISSUES  
WITH PRC TAIWAN AFFAIRS OFFICE DEPUTY

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson.  
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) Military deployments on both sides of the Taiwan Strait reflect the continuing state of hostility between the Mainland and Taiwan, State Council Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) Deputy Director Sun Yafu told visiting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) David Sedney on December 19. China's policy is to end the state of hostility, achieve a peace agreement and implement military confidence-building measures (CBMs), Sun stated. China has been slow to move on more sensitive cross-Strait issues, including military deployments, because conditions are "not yet ripe" and Beijing is concerned that trying to move too fast on sensitive issues could lead to another cross-Strait "breach." Low-level discussions of military CBMs should be possible, but China "does not know how to start." Sun warned against too much U.S. "pressure" to reduce PLA missile deployments, urging Washington to "trust" that China is "sincerely trying" to end the cross-Strait state of hostility. DASD David Sedney commended recently improved cross-Strait relations but urged Beijing to do more to assuage Taiwan's concerns and reduce Chinese military deployments aimed at Taiwan. DASD Sedney expressed his expectation that U.S. policy on Taiwan, consistent over many administrations, would continue to be so. End Summary.

APPRECIATION FOR "RESTRAINING" CHEN SHUI-BIAN

2. (C) Visiting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for Asia-Pacific Security Affairs David Sedney met with State Council Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) Deputy Director Sun Yafu on December 19 to discuss cross-Strait military issues. Deputy Director Sun thanked the U.S. for its "support" on the Taiwan issue over the past three years, particularly in "restraining" former Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's efforts to promote "Taiwan independence." Over the past six months, there have been "major changes" in cross-Strait relations, Sun stated. Referring to the upcoming change in administration in the United States, Sun asked DASD Sedney to share his views on cross-Strait relations and U.S. policy on Taiwan in the new administration.

CHINA SHOULD REDUCE THE MILITARY THREAT

13. (C) The concerns of 15 months ago, when Chen Shui-bian was pursuing a referendum on Taiwan's participation in the UN, are much different than those of today, DASD Sedney remarked. The United States played an important role in preserving peace in the Strait and is pleased with the recent progress in cross-Strait relations, which Washington hopes to see continue. In recent meetings with Taiwan officials, DASD Sedney noted, his interlocutors welcomed the improvement of cross-Strait ties but some expressed doubt about the real and lasting benefit of relations with the Mainland. It therefore is important for the Mainland and Taiwan to take advantage of the current "historic opportunity," Sedney urged.

14. (C) Though cross-Strait talks are positive, discussion alone cannot reduce the sense of threat felt by the people of Taiwan, in both the KMT and DPP, over Chinese military deployments, DASD Sedney asserted. Taiwan contacts have expressed great fear not only over the PRC missile threat but also over PLA war planes, ships, ground forces, cyber attacks and information warfare. In October, the United States announced additional arms sales to Taiwan because Taiwan needs defensive arms to maintain its security. The United States has observed that there has been no reduction of PRC military forces deployed against Taiwan since Ma Ying-jeou took office. China needs to take a "significant step" to move things forward on this front. DASD Sedney noted that he has urged PLA officers to view things from Taipei's and Washington's

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perspective. When an inquisitive Deputy Director Sun interjected with a question about the PLA response to this approach, DASD Sedney lamented that the often "shallow" nature of discussions with the PLA is a problem. If deeper discussions with the PLA were possible, Sedney remarked, the U.S. side could explain how China's military posture is perceived by many in Taiwan as menacing.

15. (C) DASD Sedney commended recent improvements in cross-Strait relations, reiterating that the United States is supportive of those efforts. Contrary to those who mistakenly think Washington is using Taiwan to obstruct China's development and to keep the two sides apart, U.S. policy, in fact, calls for a peaceful resolution of issues in a manner acceptable to the people on both sides of the Strait. U.S. policy on Taiwan is consistent and has been for several successive administrations, Sedney noted, adding that he expects it will continue to be so in the next administration. Defense Secretary Gates wants good U.S.-China relations and hopes to see a strong and prosperous China. These basic U.S. policy goals will continue, DASD Sedney concluded.

#### DRAMATIC CHANGES, REMAINING STATE OF HOSTILITY

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16. (C) There have been "dramatic and rapid changes" in cross-Strait relations since May (when Ma Ying-jeou was inaugurated), Deputy Director Sun replied. For example, the "three links" are "basically" resolved. Sun pointed out, however, that for cross-Strait direct flights, there is currently a northern route and a southern route, but not one that crosses the mid-line of the Strait. This is because the cross-Strait state of hostility that began in 1949 has not ended. The military situation on both sides is a reflection of this "ongoing state of hostility." For much of the past 60 years, Taiwan held the upper hand in the military balance across the Strait, Sun said, admitting that over the past few decades "there has been a change." Despite this change, Sun insisted,

"with U.S. help, Taiwan can maintain a military balance."

CHINA SEEKS TO END HOSTILITIES, REACH PEACE AGREEMENT

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17. (C) Sun said PRC policy is to end the state of hostility across the Strait and reach a peace agreement. Ending the state of hostility was first proposed in 1991 by Taiwan, and then-President Jiang Zemin accepted the idea in 1995 when he proposed that, on the basis of the one-China principle, the two sides should end the state of hostility, Sun argued. In October 2007, President Hu Jintao (in his political report to the 17th Party Congress) added the goal of reaching a peace agreement. In 2004, Sun said, Hu proposed establishing military confidence-building measures (CBMs) across the Strait, and that offer still stands. The two sides have made a great deal of progress, but in fact discussions on politics, international space and military issues have not started.

18. (C) Sun defended the current cross-Strait approach by the PRC, arguing that the agenda is focused on economic developments because these are areas where success can be achieved and where there exist fewer disputes. If, on the other hand, the two sides first focused on the "difficult problems" of politics, international space and military issues before conditions were ripe, it could be "counterproductive" and lead to a "worsening of the situation." China therefore wants to "set aside disputes" and "keep problems under control" so as to avoid another "breach" in cross-Strait relations. Although consultations on these sensitive issues have not started, Sun argued, the problems "will be solved someday." Both sides need to make great efforts to resolve issues because "the situation was not created by one side only." Also, the two sides must strive to create the proper conditions for solving cross-Strait problems. Each side must take the other's concerns into account. Without elaborating, Sun said that

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"Taiwan is making demands of the Mainland." Sun admitted that, "we should be able to have cross-Strait exchanges on military issues," perhaps starting at a low level or through "academic talks." This would help "build trust" and move in the direction of ending the state of hostilities. Sun admitted, however, that, "We don't know how to start."

U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS: CENTRALITY OF TAIWAN ISSUE

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19. (C) Turning to U.S.-China relations, Sun observed that the "military standoff" across the Strait has been an issue in the U.S.-China relationship for the past 60 years. Although bilateral relations have improved and the two sides have achieved a "basic level of trust," our fundamental positions on Taiwan remain unchanged. U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are the "most substantial area of dispute" between the United States and China. Sun predicted that "we will probably continue to have disputes over this issue (U.S. arms sales to Taiwan)." Nevertheless, both sides share "common ground" in wanting to reduce tension across the Strait.

110. (C) China is already familiar with U.S. positions on withdrawing PLA missiles and on WHO observership for Taiwan, Sun continued. If the United States repeats its position too often, however, Sun warned, China will feel that if it takes those steps, it is doing so in response to U.S. pressure. Therefore,

pressing China "too hard" on these issues could be "counterproductive." Sun suggested that a "better way" is to trust that China is "sincerely" trying to end hostilities, reach a peace agreement and implement military CBMs. DASD Sedney again urged China to take "significant steps" to reduce military deployments aimed at Taiwan.

¶11. (C) DASD Sedney cleared this message.  
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